

THE MORNING NEWS

Your Source for local news in English

Caya G.F. Betico Croes 111 T. 588-9517 F. 5889518.

DOW ready to accept tender offers on PPP for Watty Vos Boulevard



Plan for the beautification of area north of Costa Linda



Proposed Turbo Rotunda for the Fatum intersection

SABANA BLANCO - It is more than a few years ago since the government announced their intention to construct a ring road from the

Reina Beatrix Airport to the Sun Plaza intersection at the western outskirts of Oranjestad. The road would alleviate commuter traffic and congest-



Rotunda for intersection by Eagle Bowling and Texaco station

tion along L.G. Smith Boulevard and provide ready access for arriving vacationers directly from the airport to the principal resort areas. It has been dubbed Watty Vos Boulevard, named after Aruba's first Minister of Justice upon achieving Status Aparte, independence from the other islands of the Netherlands Antilles.

Yesterday morning, Interim Director of the Department of Public Works, (DOW) Marlon Croes, announced the plans are complete and a tender offer will be presented in detail to interested investors, financial institutions, construction companies and legal advisors on Thursday, January 23, from 9:00 AM until 3:00 PM at the Renaissance Convention Center in Oranjestad. There will be a public information evening conducted the night before from 7:00 until 9:00 PM the night before, Wednesday, January 22, at the Centro di Bario Playa Pabao.

The new ring road will be 7km in length. Total reconstruction of existing infrastructure will comprise 10km of road, in Oranjestad, Ponton and Noord, for access and exiting of the bypass, and general improvement of traffic flow, as well as 4.5 km of renovation along the Eagle Beach area, which is Phase 4 of the Linear Park Project. There will be included a 17km biking/jogging path, 13 rotundas at key intersections and two overpasses.

Continued on page 2

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Obama clips NSA's wings but bulk collection to continue

WASHINGTON (AFP) - President Barack Obama curtailed the reach of massive US National Security Agency phone surveillance sweeps yesterday, but argued that bulk data collection must go on to protect America from terrorists.

In a long-awaited speech designed to quell a furor over the programs exposed by Edward Snowden, Obama also said he had halted spy taps on friendly world leaders and proposed new protections for foreigners caught in US data mining.

"Given the unique power of the state, it is not enough for leaders to say: trust us, we won't abuse the data we collect," Obama said at the US Justice Department.

Obama's proposals represented a search for common ground between the intelligence community's resistance to reform and civil liberties advocates who view phone and Internet data trawling as a mass invasion of privacy.

They emerged from a pro-

longed period of reflection by the president and a comprehensive White House review of the national security super-state that sprung up hurriedly after the September 11 attacks in 2001.

"America's capabilities are unique," Obama said.

"The power of new technologies means that there are fewer and fewer technical constraints on what we can do.

"That places a special obligation on us to ask tough questions about what we should do."

It is doubtful however that the reassessment would have happened were it not for explosive disclosures by Snowden in one of the greatest security breaches in US history.

In the most significant reform, the president committed to ending the NSA's hoarding of telephone "metadata" detailing the duration and destination of hundreds of millions of calls but not their content.

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Get you sweetheart the perfect Valentine's gift by winning a new car at Glitz Casino!



ORANJESTAD -- Glitz Casino, located in the La Cabana Beach Resort is celebrating their first anniversary. One year ago, this month, they opened their doors and have already acquired a loyal patronage. The cozy casino offers glittering gaming excitement and some of the friendliest staffers to be found.

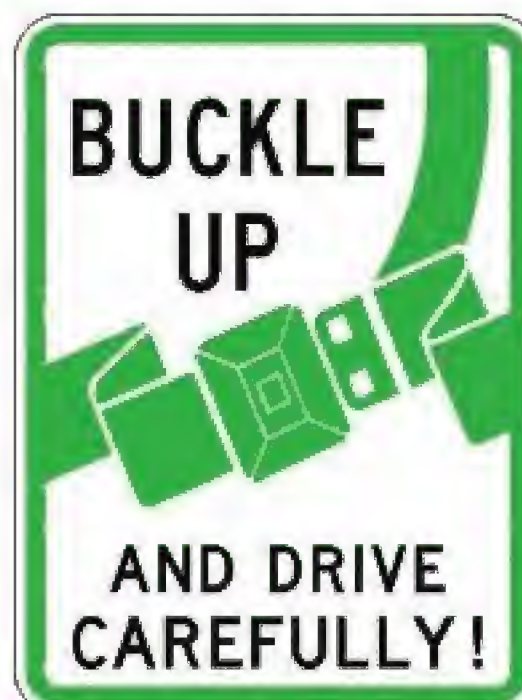
In celebration, they officially announced the commencement of their new car raffle, which began Saturday, January 11, during the broadcast of local carnival program, "Den Dje" this past Thursday evening.

Members of the Glitz

Casino Glamour Club can use their membership cards when playing the slots to accumulate points, and will receive a raffle ticket for every 25 points added to their account. Everyone purchasing a bingo card for the Monday and Friday bingo sessions will receive a raffle ticket. Players participating in the weekly Sunday Blackjack Tournament will also receive a raffle ticket, as will those making \$25 sports bets and players at the regular blackjack tables who win with a classic blackjack hand of the same suit.

To win the car, you must be a member of the Glitz Casino Glamour Club, which is free. The drawing will be at 11:00 PM on Valentine's Day, Friday February 14, and you must be present during the drawing to win a brand new Nissan Versa.

The owners and management of Glitz Casino appreciated the way the island community has welcomed them, and are pleased and proud to show it with this exciting promotion. Some lucky winner will have a very special gift awaiting them this Valentine's Day, courtesy of Glitz Casino!



DOW ready to accept tender offers

Continued on page 1

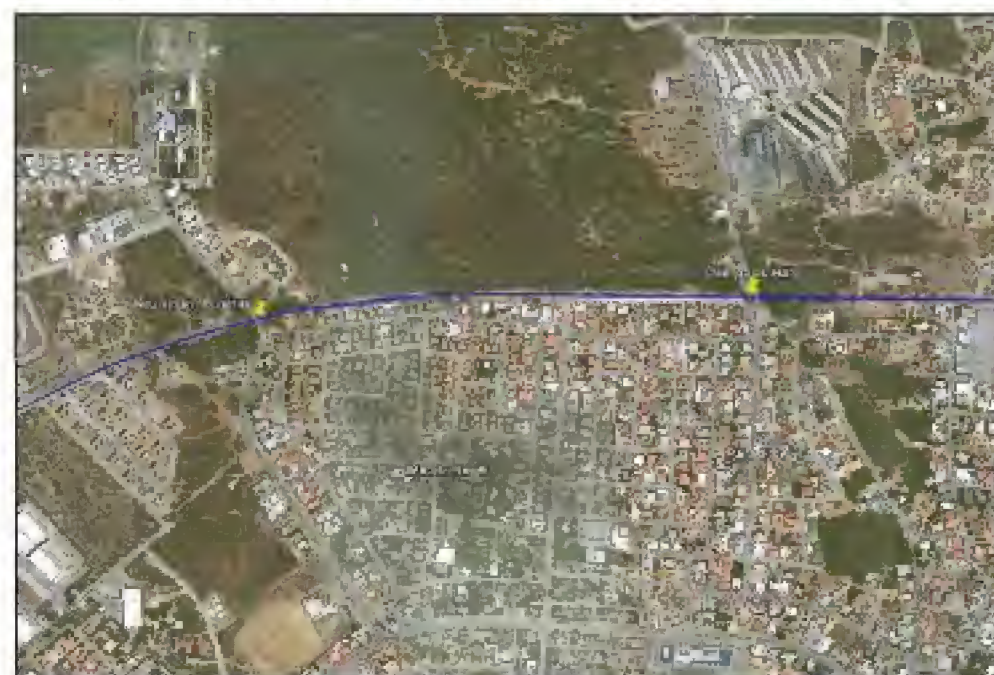
Busy intersections where new rotundas are planned include Cumana, Sero Patrishi, Tanki Leendert, Ponton, Bushin, Caya di Pos (Ling & Sons) Punta Brabo (the Fatum/Sun Plaza intersection where there is now a traffic light, which will also provide access to the bypass) Caya Punta Brabo and Irausquin Blvd at the Alhambra, Bubali and Irausquin Blvd, Sasaki Highway and Bubali Road at Superfood, Sasaki Highway and the Hospital turn off, Montaña by Fermin's Bar and the principal Noord intersection by the Santa Ana Church. The Watty Vos Boulevard Overpasses will be at Meiveld and Hato.

This ring road will also reroute large cargo trucks from the Barcadera Container Harbor, facilitating direct access to warehouses and the hotel area. This would clear L.G. Smith Boulevard in Oranjestad of large commercial vehicles.

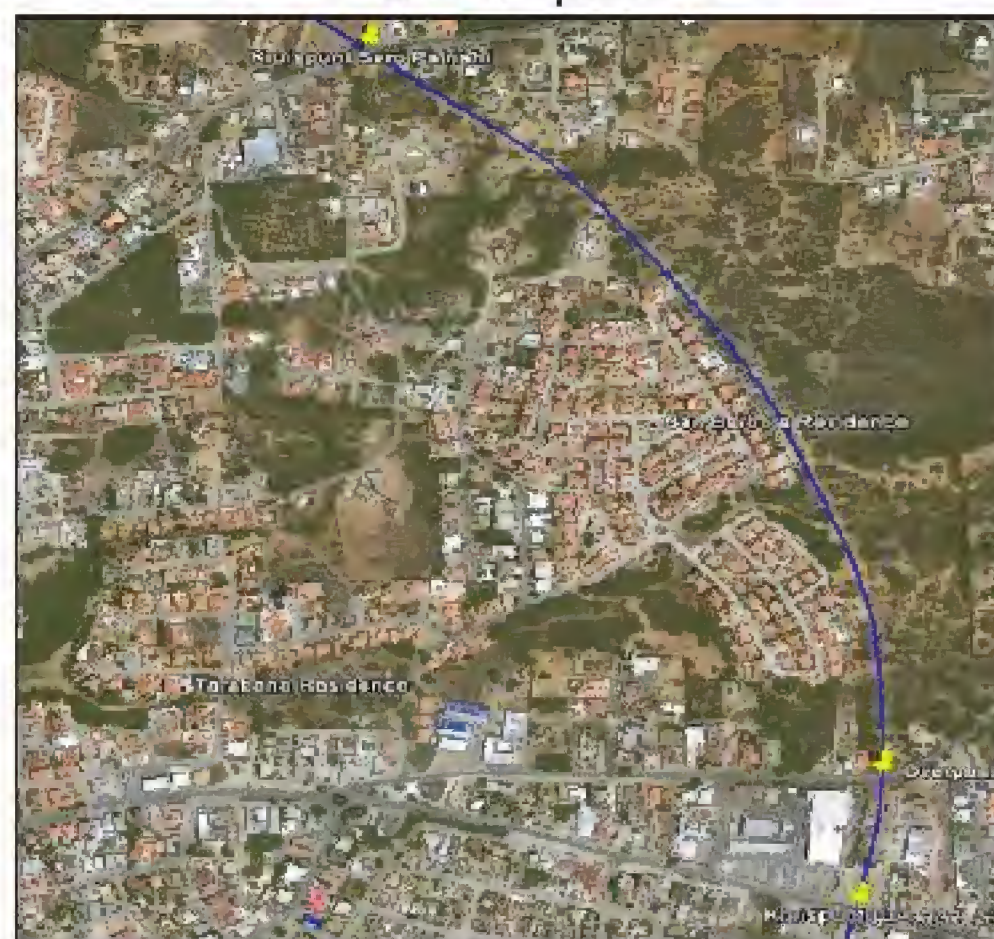
The PPP Watty Vos Boulevard Project for which the government plans to offer for tender will be for approximately 22.5 years, which is to include construction and maintenance. "The payments to the Contractor are conditional on the delivery and proven availability of the infrastructure to the Contracting Authority. This creates a difference in the timing between income and expenditure for the Contractor and, consequently, the need for financing. The Contractor must arrange for the necessary financing within this context. This would allow 2.5 years for construction and 20 years of maintenance," according to Mr. Croes. Detailed information regarding the project, particularly for those interested in bidding on the tender, is available at <http://www.p3aruba.com/> as well as other PPP projects planned by the Aruban government. Questions regarding the upcoming project and process can be directed to e-mail: wvb@p3aruba.com



DOW Interim Director Marlon Croes and team



Hato overpass



Oranjestad bypass

PAGA TINO warns island youth:

Beware of alcohol, its dangers and consequences



ORANJESTAD – Alcohol is the most used drug worldwide. It is a drug that kills people around the world. One of the reasons that alcohol is a legal substance is because it is easy to get and is sold almost everywhere, popularly used in most celebrations. During the carnival season, when excessive indulgence is rampant, FADA, the Aruba Foundation Against Drug Abuse, sends this message.

Pure alcohol is a transparent liquid, with no color and taste. It is produced by adding yeast to food that contains sugar, such as potatoes, grains and fruits. The yeast ferments the food and allows the sugar to turn to alcohol.

A few examples:

Grain is used to make beer. Grapes are used to make wine. Grain, sugar cane, potato and different fruits are used to make drinks with a high alcohol percentage.

The negative effects of alcohol are felt less by a person who consumes it moderately than one who abuses alcohol. Alcohol abuse most often negatively impacts several aspects of a person's life.

Social: Communication, activities, family, friends and work.

Physical: Damage to the internal organs and general health.

Mental: An emotional imbalance.

A person who cannot live without consuming alcohol daily is an alcoholic. A person addicted to alcohol becomes irritable, sweats and becomes dizzy, and experiences anxiety.

It is scientifically proven

that the younger a person starts drinking alcohol, the greater the chance to become an alcoholic/alcohol addict.

Children whose parents are alcoholic are more prone to becoming an alcoholic as well.

Physicians are advising youngster under the age of 18 against consuming alcohol, as the chance is great to experience alcohol intoxication, which can be lethal.

The symptoms are:

- Change in behavior, i.e. relaxed, irritable, glad, sentimental, aggressive,
- Coordination diminishes
- Face becomes red and the pupils of the eyes dilated.
- Nausea and vomiting
- Dull and/or not being actually present
- Imbalance of respiration and pulse.

The reaction of consuming alcohol depends on the amount consumed, kind of alcohol, combinations and an individual's constitution.

Short term consequences:

- Heavy headaches, insomnia, nausea (hangover)
- Vomiting
- Becoming aggressive – alcohol makes a person intolerant, often accelerating the process of becoming belligerent and argumentative
- Affects common sense, self control, speech, hearing and coordination
- Loss of awareness (the individual forgets everything, falls down and wakes up at places, unaware how they got there)
- Gastritis, stomach burn, stomach ache
- Intoxication (in case of consuming too much alcohol).

Long term consequences:

- Heart attack
- High blood pressure
- Stroke
- Damage to the pancreas and liver
- Mouth, throat, breast, intestine and liver cancer
- Brain damage; alcohol works directly on the brain, which causes memory deterioration.

(Mostly the part that enables an individual to reason, plan and solve problems)

The consequences are worse for youth because they are still developing.

- Death because of intoxication.

Continued on page 5

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ATA honors group of loyal friends at Divi Village Golf & Beach Resort for



Recently, ATA representative Marouska Heyliger had the great pleasure in honoring a group of loyal Aruba visitors with their distinctive certificates. These certificates are a way to say "Masha Danki" for continuously choosing Aruba as a favorite vacation destination. The titles are as following: Those who visit Aruba between 10 and 20 consecutive years receive the "Distinguished Visitor" distinction and those who visit Aruba for 20 or more consecutive years, receive the "Goodwill Ambassador" distinction. The honorees are John Heald and Suzanne Hilgendorf from Michigan as Goodwill Ambassadors; Paul & Holly Bauer from New Jersey as Goodwill Ambassadors and Katie Bauer and Steven Bauer from New Jersey as Distinguished Visitors. According to the honorees they love Aruba very much because of the friendly people, the climate, beaches, restaurants, and being on Aruba is like being home for them. Photo shows the honorees proudly showing of their certificates in presence of with Gloria Defoe and Marouska Heyliger. The symbolic honorary titles are presented in the name of the Minister of Tourism as a token of appreciation.



Aruba's 60th Carnaval

FCCA and Majestic crown their Mrs. Carnival Marylou Fradl



Directors Peter van Popple and Maria Christina Lacle crown their queen



Marylou with her husband and children



With the FCCA Pancho and a dear friend

WAYACA -- The management and staff of Fundacion Cas Pa Comunidad Arubano, or FCCA, were fully immersed in the carnival spirit for the crowning of their candidate for Diamond Jubilee Mrs. Carnival. Island band D'Licious was pouring out the carnival music as their vivacious candidate, Marylou Fradl made her way

to the stage to be crowned by FCCA Directors Peter van Popple and Maria Christina Lacle.

Marylou is not only the FCCA queen, but is also representing Majestic Carnival Group in the final Mrs. Carnival Pageant, which will take place at the Aruba Entertainment Center on Thursday, Feb-

ruary 13. Swinda Winterdaal of Majestic Carnival Group was present on Thursday evening, January 16, to lay the official sash across their candidate's shoulders.

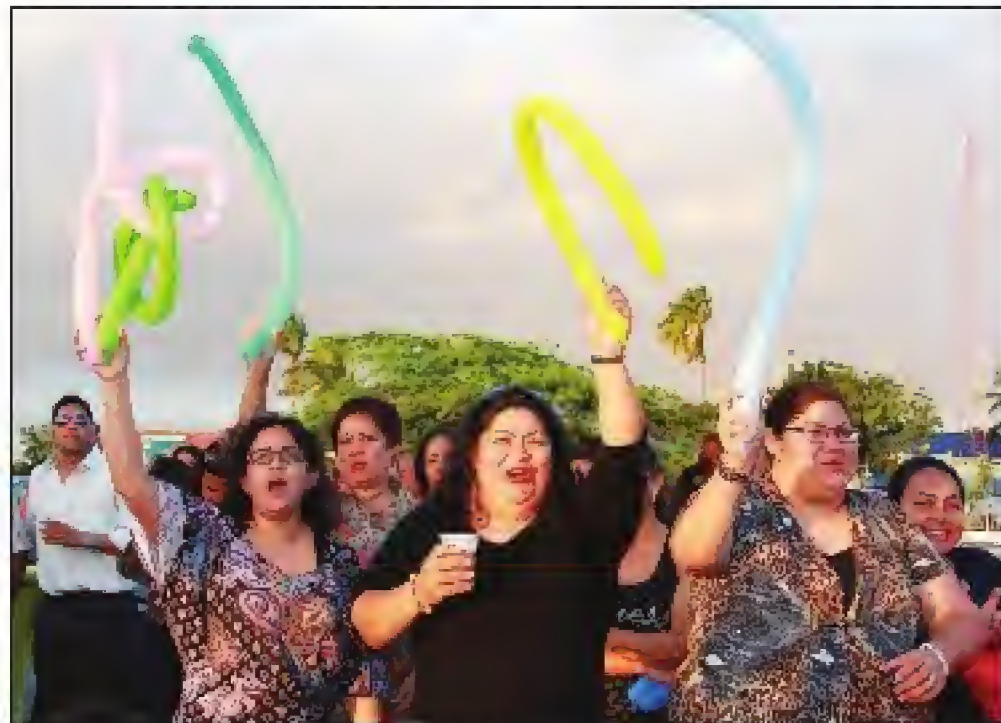
The Mrs. Carnival pageants began 20 years ago, a fun com-

petition that proved you were never too old to be a carnival queen. It began as a casual affair, with presentations by the candidates based on comedy routines.

For the past five years at

least, it has become as elegant a spectacle as the Grand Carnival Queen elections, with fantastic gowns, native costumes and musical productions.

Continued on page 5



Carnival spirit is high at FCCA

Carnaval Schedule

Fri. Jan 17 - Children's Queen Election of Sta. Cruz

Sat. Jan 18 - 6:30 p.m.: Aruba's Children and Youth Calypso & Roadmarch Contest 2014 (Aruba Entertainment Center)

Sun. Jan 19 - 8:00 p.m.: Sign up Happening Caiso & Soca Monarch Contest 2014 (Aruba Entertainment Center)

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FCCA crowns Mrs. Carnival

Continued from page 4

It is an exciting evening of entertainment with the added dash of crowning the woman who will join the carnival royalty during remaining events.

Marylou will be seen riding on floats in the midst of the Majestic section of all remaining parades for the next seven weeks of Carnival 60. Always an enthusiast, she has participated every year for decades, dancing in the streets with a variety of carnival groups.

This year, the very attractive FCCA and Majestic Mrs. Carnival, with grown children and a devoted husband, Endy, proved you don't have to be 18 to be a stunning carnival queen!

PAGA TINO warns island youth

Continued from page 3

- Acquire Korsakoff syndrome: a neurological disorder caused by a lack of vitamin B in the brain. Its onset is linked to chronic alcohol abuse and/or severe malnutrition

- Fetal alcohol syndrome: a pattern of mental and physical defects that can develop in a fetus in association with high levels of alcohol consumption during pregnancy.

- Impotency: men and women.

Tips

- Avoid drinking and driving
- If you are planning to consume alcohol, let someone else drive for you
- Avoid consuming alcohol in front of your children
- Always remember to set a good example
- Always remember that prevention starts at home
- Do not offer alcohol to invitees at children's parties
- In case of alcohol addiction, get professional help as soon as possible.

For more information, please contact FADA at tel.: 5832999 or 5839610, Fax: 5834501, fundacionantidroga.org or visit its Face Book page.

FADA is situated at Campanastraat 5, Dakota (Tara-bana).

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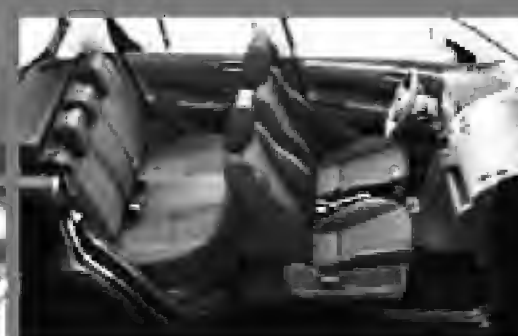
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Sunrise 07:06 am sunset 06:35 pm.

WIND:

strong winds direction east average 19 kts gusting up to 34

kts.

GENERAL SITUATION:

a high pressure area over the atlantic ocean is intensifying causing strong tradewinds and isolated showers of short duration.

Tradewinds will remain strong this weekend.

MARINE CONDITIONS:

wave direction will be east-

northeast with wave-heights between 5 to 10 feet.

Use caution over open waters.

EXPECTATIONS FOR THE WEEKEND AND THE BEGINNING OF NEXT WEEK:

Weather will stay humid with skies partly cloudy to mostly sunny and chance of a

local shower of short duration.

Tradewinds will stay strong.

Temperature will fluctuate just below normal.

Observed temperature (centigrade) and rainfall (mm) in the last 24 hours:

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Colombia's Santos says peace deal attainable this year

BOGOTA (AFP) - Colombian President Juan Manuel Santos said yesterday he believes his government can reach a peace deal with leftist rebels this year, a day after a deadly bomb attack blamed on the guerrillas.

"I am convinced that if both parties continue to be willing, we are going to achieve peace -- a peace which will change this country," Santos said in a radio interview.

The Colombian leader added that he was "guardedly optimistic" that talks with rebels from the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) could even wrap up before May's presidential election.

Negotiations between leftist rebels and the Bogota government resumed on Monday after a three-week hiatus.

Talks have been under way since since November 2012 to end nearly 50 years of armed conflict, Latin America's longest-running insurgency.

Dialogue between the two sides has proceeded in fits and starts. They have reached consensus on two issues -- rural development and the political reintegration of demobilized rebels -- but tough issues remain, including disarming the guerrillas.

On Thursday, a deadly motorcycle bombing blamed on the FARC, ended a month-long truce that had been a gesture of goodwill during the peace talks with the Colombian government that are taking place in Havana.

The attack killed at least one person and wounded more than two dozen.

4 dead, including foreigners, in Kabul restaurant attack

KABUL (AFP) - At least 14 people were killed, including foreigners, in a multiple Taliban suicide attack on a popular restaurant in Kabul yesterday, officials said, with two gunmen launching an "indiscriminate" killing spree inside the venue.

The assault on the Taverna du Liban in the upmarket Wazir Akbar Khan neighbourhood was quickly claimed by Taliban militants fighting against the Afghan government and US-led foreign forces in the country.

Elite security commandos rushed to seal off the small streets around the restaurant as sporadic gunfire erupted for a short time after the blast.

Obama clips NSA's wings

Continued from page 1

He stressed that he did not believe that abuses had occurred or that US spies had been "cavalier" about civil liberties.

But he agreed with critics who say the program could yield information about private lives and open the door to more intrusion.

"I believe we need a new approach. I am therefore ordering a transition that will end the Section 215 bulk metadata program as it currently exists, and establish a mechanism that preserves the capabilities we need without the government holding this bulk meta-data."

Obama called on Attorney General Eric Holder and the NSA to come up suggestions for an alternative way to hold the material within 60 days.

Possible alternatives include keeping records with telecommunications firms, which are currently compelled to turn it over to the NSA, or to deposit it with a third party.

Obama also said that from now on, NSA agents would need the endorsement of a special intelligence court before accessing data on a specific target.

The NSA will also now only be permitted to access call data from people at two removes from a suspect in an investigation. Previously it could probe three "hops."

But the president made clear that the retention of phone data could provide a vital tool for US spies to trace links between terror suspects and must continue. He also said that he had already ordered a halt to dozens of phone tap operations targeting friendly foreign leaders.

"I have made clear to the intelligence community that -- unless there is a compelling na-

tional security purpose -- we will not monitor the communications of heads of state and government of our close friends and allies," he said.

The move followed a furor over claims by fugitive contractor Snowden, now exiled in Russia, that US spies snooped on the phone of German Chancellor Angela Merkel and other leaders.

But he also took a swipe at the chorus of complaints about US activities from some allies, saying US spies will carry on about their business.

"We will not apologize simply because our services may be more effective," he said, and noted that rivals like Russia and China would not undertake such an open debate.

Obama is also taking the unprecedented step of extending personal protections enjoyed by Americans to foreigners caught in US phone and Internet data sweeps. The measures include restrictions on how long data can be held and to introduce restrictions on its use.

The president, who has demanded Snowden return home to face trial, only mentioned the US nemesis in passing.


The reforms got a guarded welcome from privacy advocates, questions about how they would work -- and some disappointment they did not go further.

Steven Hawkins, Executive Director of Amnesty International USA said that privacy still remained under threat.

"President Obama's recognition of the need to safeguard the privacy of people around the world is significant, but insufficient to end serious global concern over mass surveillance, which by its very nature constitutes abuse," he argued.



JODA : South Sudanese refugees stand outside a shelter as they arrive at a Sudanese border checkpoint in Joda, where Sudan's White Nile state meets the South's Upper Nile, after fleeing battles between rebel and government forces on January 17, 2014. Those waiting on the border are among an estimated 10,000 who have fled north to Sudan as part of an exodus, which the UN's refugee agency UNHCR says has seen almost 80,000 people escape battles between rebel and government forces in South Sudan over the past month. (AFP PHOTO)



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California declares drought emergency

LOS ANGELES (AFP) - California's worst drought in a century is devastating the state's agriculture and destroying its forestland, which is being consumed by wildfire, Governor Jerry Brown said Friday as he declared a state emergency.

The emergency declaration allows California to access federal help to battle the drought, which has left huge swathes of tinder-dry forest vulnerable to catching fire.

On Thursday, a massive blaze raged just outside Los Angeles, damaging several homes and forcing residents to evacuate the area, where the fire risk had been elevated for weeks.

Brown urged residents of his state to reduce their water use by at least 20 percent.

"I've declared this emergency and I'm calling on all Californians to conserve water

in every way possible," he said in his statement. "We can't make it rain," he added.

Brown told reporters in San Francisco that the current conditions were "the worst drought that California has ever seen since records (began) about 100 years ago," media reports said.

The region is suffering its third dry winter in a row, highlighted by the Los Angeles blaze.

California and other western US states are routinely hit with wildfires during the summer, but winter fires like the ones currently raging, are relatively rare.

California's rivers and reservoirs have reached record lows, with only 20 percent of the normal average supplies of water from melting snowpack, which flows down from mountains like the Sierra Nevada north-to-south range.



THE VATICAN - Pope Francis on Thursday hosted a delegation of 15 Jewish leaders from his native Argentina for an informal kosher lunch at the Vatican's Santa Marta guesthouse. The conversation with the pontiff, who was born Jorge Mario Bergoglio in Buenos Aires, focused on strengthening interfaith dialogue, according to Claudio Epelman, executive director of the Latin American Jewish Congress. Epelman is also the World Jewish Congress official in charge of dialogue with the Catholic Church. It was an "extraordinary gesture by Pope Francis to take more than two hours out of his busy schedule for a conversation with Jewish leaders from his native Argentina," said Epelman, who organized the lunch with Argentine Rabbi Abraham Skorka. At the end of the lunch, the group intoned Psalm 133 in Hebrew, which says, "How good and pleasant it is when God's people live together in unity!"



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Indian minister's wife found dead amid adultery row: reports

NEW DELHI (AFP) - The wife of prominent Indian minister Shashu Tharoor was found dead Friday in a five-star hotel room after she exposed his alleged adultery with a Pakistani journalist on Twitter, media reports said.

The Press Trust of India, quoting unnamed police sources, said the minister reported his wife's death to police. It was not immediately known how Sunanda Pushkar had died.

Pushkar's death came a day after Tharoor issued what he called a joint statement from the couple saying they were "happily married and intend to remain that way".

The statement added that

"Sunanda has been ill and hospitalised this week and is seeking to rest" and asked for the media to respect the couple's privacy.

The alleged affair surfaced late Wednesday when a curious series of messages appeared on the Twitter account of the suave thrice-married human resources minister, seen by his two million followers.

They showed private exchanges purportedly between the 57-year-old (@shashitharoor) and Pakistani journalist Mehr Tarar (@mehrtarar), in which she professed her love for him and he said his wife had discovered his affair.

Tharoor quickly responded

by saying his Twitter account had been "hacked," but wife Sunanda spoke to two newspapers saying that she was the author of the messages.

"Our accounts have not been hacked and I have been sending out these tweets," Sunanda told the Economic Times, adding to the Indian Express that she "100 percent" stood by the messages.

The Pakistani journalist strongly denied having an affair with the former high-flying UN diplomat.

Tharoor had to resign from his first ministerial post after revelations that then-girlfriend Sunanda had been given a free stake in a new Indian Premier League (IPL) cricket team.

Putin says gays at Olympics must 'leave children alone'

MOSCOW (AFP) - Russian President Vladimir Putin on Friday said gays need not fear persecution at the Winter Olympic Games, but stood by a controversial ban on promoting homosexuality to children.

"We don't have a ban on non-traditional sexual relations between people," Putin told a group of volunteers who will be working at the Games.

"We have a ban on the propaganda of homosexuality and paedophilia," Putin said in televised comments from host city

Sochi, with three weeks to go until the event. "We don't ban anything and we won't arrest anyone," he said. "Therefore you can feel calm, relaxed. But leave children alone please."

Gay rights activists around the world have called for a boycott of the Sochi Winter Olympics in protest against a law banning the dissemination of so-called "gay propaganda" to minors.

The president's comments, reiterating a stance that suggests homosexuals prey on young

people, were unlikely to appease critics of the ban.

United States President Barack Obama has pointedly announced he was sending an Olympic delegation that includes several openly gay sports figures, among them tennis legend Billie Jean King.

A senior cleric from the Russian Orthodox Church, which is closely allied to Putin, this month called for a national debate on returning a Soviet-era law repealed in 1993 that criminalised gay sex.

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 EARLY BIRD SPECIAL



Colombia gets tough on drunk driving

BOGOTA (AFP) - Colombia is cracking down on drunk driving, imposing a fine nearly 50 times the country's minimum monthly wage as it tries to set an example for Latin America.

After a series of deadly accidents last year, Colombia's Congress used the holiday period -- usually a well-lubricated one -- to pass the tough new law against people who drink and drive.

Until now, the fine could be the equivalent of \$900 and 20 hours of community service.

But now, depending on the driver's blood-alcohol level, the fine can reach as much as \$14,600 -- in a country where the minimum monthly wage is about \$320.

In general, Latin America is not known for road safety.

The mortality rate stemming from highway accidents was 16.1 per 100,000 inhabitants in

2012, according to a report by the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO). That compares to 10.3 in Europe, according to the World Health Organization, and 5.8 in France.

In the Andean region, where roads are poorly maintained, cars are in bad condition and police checkpoints are rare, the figure goes up to 22.1.

"The two risk factors, which are our top priority, are driving under the influence of alcohol and speeding," said Eugenia Rodrigues, an official with the Pan American Health Organization who works on road safety issues.

The organization, which recommends a maximum permitted blood alcohol level of 0.5 grams per liter of blood, is constantly urging Latin American countries to set up more drunk driving checkpoints and toughen penalties for offenders

AIDS infections down by a third in S.Africa: UNAIDS

JOHANNESBURG (AFP) - New cases of HIV and AIDS fell sharply in South Africa since ten years ago, a testimony to successful treatment, according to a report by the UN Aids body released Friday.

In 2004 around 540,000 South Africans contracted HIV, but the number dropped by a third to 370,000 in 2012, UNAIDS said.

Graphs showed plummeting numbers of people dying of the condition yearly from 330,000 to 240,000 in the same period.

At 6.4 million seropositive cases South Africa still has the largest number of people living with AIDS, but the figures showed success in public treatment programmes, according to Sozi.

After years of dragging its feet, Africa's wealthiest country has developed the world's largest HIV treatment programme since 2004.

Around 2.4 million people are receiving free AIDS drugs today.

Transmission from mothers to their babies fell the sharpest and is now approaching zero, according to UNAIDS.

The latest figures brings the country closer to its target of halving new infections.



Cigarettes more dangerous than ever: US health report

WASHINGTON (AFP) - Smoking cigarettes can cause even more health problems than previously known, including liver and colon cancer, blindness, diabetes and erectile dysfunction, said a major US government report on Friday.

Top health officials gathered at the White House to announce the latest Surgeon General's findings on smoking, five decades after the first landmark report of its kind alerted the public that cigarettes caused lung cancer.

Smoking remains the leading preventable cause of premature death in the United States, killing nearly half a million Americans a year.

"Amazingly, 50 years in we are still finding out new ways that tobacco maims and kills people," said Centers for Disease Control and Prevention director Thomas Frieden. "Tobacco is even worse than we knew it was."

Active smoking is now known to be a cause of 13 different cancers, as well as diabetes and age-related macular degeneration, said the report.

Smoking can also cause tuberculosis, erectile dysfunction, facial clefts in babies, ectopic pregnancy, rheumatoid arthritis, inflammation, impaired immune function, and

worsens the outlook for cancer patients and survivors.

Those who do not smoke but are exposed to second-hand smoke face an increased risk of stroke, said the report.

Since the first report in 1964, more than 20 million people in the United States have died from smoking-related diseases and illnesses caused by second-hand smoke.

The smoking rate is way down in the United States. Eighteen percent of people here now smoke, compared to 42 percent five decades ago.

But if the rate does not drop further, one in 13 children alive today will be felled by a disease linked to smoking, the report added.

The cost of smoking in America is more than \$289 billion a year in direct medical care and other economic losses, the report said.

Cigarillos and e-cigarettes are not regulated as strictly as tobacco.

The report called for experts to monitor new tobacco products, but said there is not enough data to conclude that nicotine alone causes or contributes to cancer in humans.

Nicotine has, however, been shown to pose dangers for pregnant mothers and can harm a developing fetus.

Google making sugar-sensing contact lens for diabetics

SAN FRANCISCO (AFP) - The Google lab known for working on unusual projects like self-driving cars is crafting a contact lens that could help diabetics manage blood sugar levels. "We're now testing a smart contact lens that's built to measure glucose levels in tears," project co-founders Brian Otis and Babak Parviz said Thursday in a blog post. The lens works "using a tiny wireless chip and miniaturized glucose sensor that are embedded between two layers of soft contact lens material," Otis and Parviz said. They said prototypes have undergone clinical tests and talks were underway with the US Food and Drug Administration. Prototype lenses being tested at Google X can generate glucose readings about once a second. Researchers are looking into integrating tiny lights that would warn when blood sugar levels go above or below threshold levels, according to the blog post. "At a time when the International Diabetes Federation is declaring that the world is 'losing the battle' against diabetes, we thought this project was worth a shot." Google cited figures indicating that diabetes affects one in every 19 people on the planet.



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Robert Redford raps studio after Oscars snub



LOS ANGELES (AFP) - Veteran US actor Robert Redford said he was not upset by failing to win an Oscar nomination, but said the distributors of his latest film did not campaign fully for it.

The "Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid" icon had been hotly tipped to secure a best actor nod for shipwreck film "All is Lost," but was not included in the Academy Award nominations announced in Beverly Hills.

Speaking at the Sundance Film Festival hours after the Oscars announcement, Redford said he was proud of his latest work, an almost speech-free film about a sailor battling for survival after being shipwrecked at sea.

"It was so stripped down of elements that are in most films... It was for me more of a pure cinematic experience. I love that. ... I'm very happy about that film," he told the festival's opening press conference. But he continued: "Hollywood is what it is, it's a business and so when these films go to be voted on, usually they're heavily dependent on campaigns that the distributors provide. There's a lot of campaigning that goes on, and it can get very political but that's ok because it is a business. "In our case, I think we suffered from little to no distribution. And so as a result, our distributors -- I don't know why, they didn't want to spend the money, they were afraid, they were just incapable, I don't know."

Redford did not identify who he was talking about, but the industry journal Variety said his comments were aimed at Lionsgate, the movie company behind blockbusters like the "Hunger Games" franchise.

A spokesman for the Santa Monica, California-based company declined to comment when asked about Redford's remarks.

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Streep extends Oscar nominations record

LOS ANGELES (AFP) - Three-time Oscar winner Meryl Streep extended her record as the performer with the most Academy Award nominations, with her 18th nod announced on Thursday.

"Hunger Games" star Jennifer Lawrence meanwhile became the youngest ever three-time acting nominee at 23, with her performance in top-tipped crime caper "American Hustle."

Woody Allen -- famously averse to awards ceremonies -- added to his record for writ-



ing nominations with his 16th nod, while composer John Williams has the most nods of any living person, with 49.

Streep has won three Oscars in her long career in 17 previous nominations. She added another one Thursday, for best actress for playing a drug-addled matriarch in bleak family drama "August: Osage County."

She last won two years ago, for her compelling portrayal of Margaret Thatcher in "The Iron Lady." Before that she had not won for nearly three

decades: in 1980 for best supporting actress in "Kramer vs. Kramer" and 1983 for best actress in "Sophie's Choice."

Reacting to her latest nomination, she said Thursday: "I am so happy for our film that (co-star) Julia (Roberts) and I have been nominated."

"We are both so proud of 'August: Osage County.' This honor from the Academy, for which we are truly grateful, will help bring attention to our film from audiences across the country, which is thrilling," she added.

Target breach linked to global cybercrime: researchers

WASHINGTON (AFP) - The massive data breach at US retailer Target is probably linked to a broader global network of cybercrime that may have affected other merchants, security researchers said.

US security firm iSight Partners concluded that the hackers who stole data on as many as 110 million Target customers comes from "a new piece of malicious software," which "has potentially infected a large number of retail information systems," according to a statement Thursday from the company, which has been working with US authorities.

A separate report by the Israeli-based firm Seculert said an analysis of the malware showed the attack "had two stages, which is a well known attribute of an advanced threat."

The malware first infected Target's checkout counters to extract credit numbers and sensitive personal details, "then after staying undetected for six days, the malware started transmitting the stolen data to an external FTP server, using another infected machine within the Target network" Seculert said.

Seculert said the hackers used a virtual private server (VPS) located in Russia to download the stolen data and "continued to download the data over two weeks." But the firm found no evidence of a link to other retailers such as Neiman Marcus, which was

also compromised.

Jim Walter of McAfee Labs said in a blog post that his firm has found "credible evidence to indicate that the malware used in the Target stores attack is related to existing malware kits sold in underground forums."

Walter said the malware is similar in function to and possibly derived from a bug known as "BlackPOS" which first was detected last year. Meanwhile, researchers from IntelCrawler, a Los-Angeles based cyber intelligence company, said in a statement the BlackPOS malware was created by a 17-year-old hacker and has been used to infect retail systems in Australia, Canada and the US.

"The first name of the malware was a lyric 'Kaptoxa,' which means potato in Russian slang, according to a statement from IntelCrawler.

The firm said the malware was sold more than 40 times to cybercriminals from Eastern Europe and other countries, including the operators of sites selling stolen credit card data.

The US Secret Service, which is leading the investigation, declined to comment on the latest developments.

Target meanwhile began notifying some of its customers that it was offering one year of free credit monitoring, to help customers guard against identity theft or unauthorized charges to their debit or credit cards.

Panama to use transgenic mosquitoes in anti-dengue bid



PANAMA CITY (AFP) - Panama will try to control a dengue outbreak that has claimed six lives this year by releasing transgenic mosquitoes to render infertile female transmitters of the disease, officials said Tuesday.

Health Ministry director Carlos Galvez told AFP the technique has "shown promise" in Brazil and the Cayman Islands.

In Panama, it is being run by the Instituto Gorgas tropical research institute.

"The GM male mosquitoes have contact with the females that transmit dengue; then the eggs the (non-GM) females lay no longer produce (dengue-transmitting) mosquitoes," he explained.

Galvez said the GM mosquitoes are not a danger to humans because they do not feed on blood, but rather on fruits.

GM mosquitoes live for just a week, while normal ones live for a month.

The ministry plans to release the GM bugs in two weeks, numbering in the hundreds for each estimated dengue-transmitting female.



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Jawbone earpiece makes it easier to love smartphones



SAN FRANCISCO (AFP) - Jawbone on Thursday began making it easier to love Siri, Google Now or other virtual assistants in a hint at the future portrayed in the Oscar-nominated film "Her."

The San Francisco-based company behind sophisticated and stylish wireless ear pieces released a new ERA model packing big technology in a diminutive form and enabling users to speak more naturally with software on their mobile devices.

"I hope they don't fall in love with their operating systems, but they will at least rekindle a relationship with voice commands," Jawbone audio product manager Gernard Feril said while providing AFP an early look at the new ERA.

Feril was making a playful reference to the Spike Jonze film "Her" starring Joaquin Phoenix, who plays a man who falls in love with a personal computer operating system.

Advanced Siri and Google Now software, which combine natural language exchanges

with contextual awareness and even anticipating what users might want, have created a place for an ERA ear piece with enhanced technology for speaking to smartphones as one would a person, according to Feril.

Jawbone built in wide-band audio, high-quality microphones, and "NoiseAssassin" software to block out unwanted sounds to make voice quality closer to what is found in Internet telephone calls than in typical ear pieces.

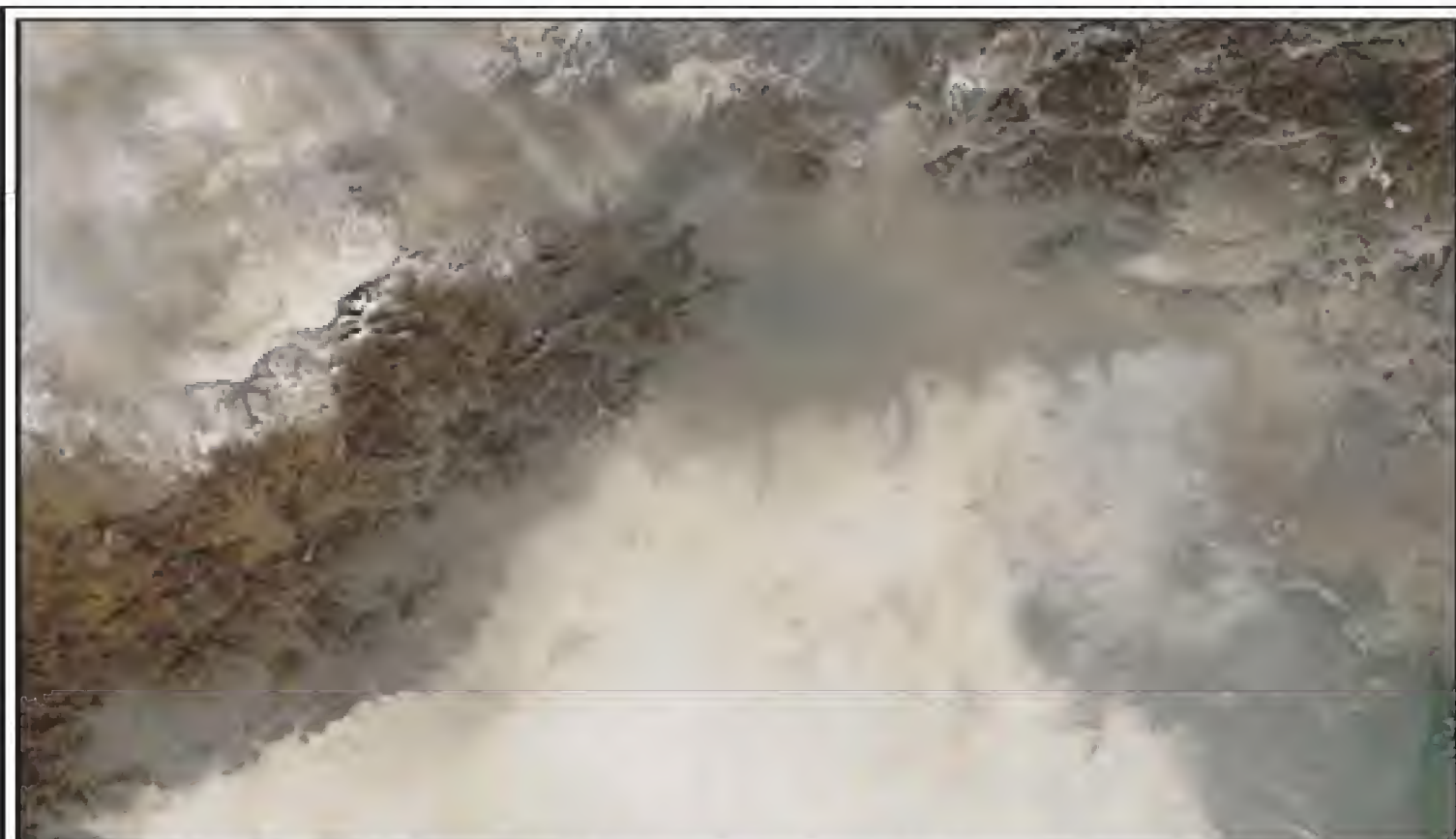
Being able to speak commands and have spoken exchanges with virtual assistants through the ear piece frees people to either ignore smartphone screens or use them for other tasks, such as email, games or maps.

And, as screen sizes of mobile devices have grown, they become awkward to hold up to faces, he noted.

The annual Consumer Electronics Show gadget extravaganza that played out last week in Las Vegas was rife with headsets. Jawbone set out to distinguish itself with a tiny, high-quality ear piece crafted with style and brains to complement smartphone lifestyles.

Feril billed ERA as the smallest, lightest, best-sounding ear piece available.

A Jawbone "Nerd" USB device can be used to automatically synch the ear piece to laptop computers.



PARIS (AFP) - Scientists said Friday they had mapped ground-level air pollution in China from space for the first time, a feat that should help the fight against a notorious health hazard. French and Belgian atmospheric scientists used an infrared sensor aboard a European MetOp weather satellite to map plumes of particles and carbon dioxide, sulphur dioxide and ammonia over the north China plain, blanketing Beijing, Tianjin and Hebei province in January 2013. The experts were surprised to find the technology works, but discovered the success also depends on two conditions: There have to be "stable" weather conditions, so pollution accumulates at ground level. There also has to be a big temperature difference between air at ground level and higher layers of the atmosphere for the warm emissions of pollution to stand out, it said.



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The Netherlands slashes gas production after quake protests

THE HAGUE (AFP) - The Dutch government said yesterday it would slash gas production in Europe's biggest field by 20 percent over three years after protests by villagers who blame the extraction for causing earthquakes.

"The earthquake problem is a problem for all the Dutch," Economics Minister Henk Kamp told a chaotic press conference in the northern village of Loppersum.

Kamp had travelled to the village, one of those worst affected by the earthquakes, to announce the cabinet's decision and was repeatedly interrupted by protestors calling

for a complete halt to gas production.

Police pushed back protesters but did not make any arrests.

Gas extraction can leave empty spaces underground, raising risks of subsidence.

Local people have demonstrated repeatedly, calling for a reduction of gas extraction after quakes damaged farms, homes and historic buildings in the area.

The relatively low magnitude earthquakes are a described as a "natural" result of huge pockets of air left underground by massive gas ex-

traction.

They became increasingly frequent after the Netherlands more than doubled its gas production since 2000, hitting 50 billion cubic metres annually.

The five gas wells around the village of 11,000 will cut production by 80 percent over the next three years.

"We will go from 15 billion cubic metres a year to three billion cubic metres," Kamp said.

The Netherlands is Europe's second-biggest producer and makes an annual average of 13 billion euros (\$16 billion) from gas.

The northern Groningen gas field, the largest in the European Union, will have its production slashed from 50 billion cubic metres to 40 billion by the end of 2016.

The field provides the Netherlands -- the world's 10th-biggest gas producer -- with two-thirds of its gas.

Extraction will be reduced around most-affected villages, but could be resumed if necessary.

"If there's urgent need we need to be able to produce gas quickly," said Kamp.

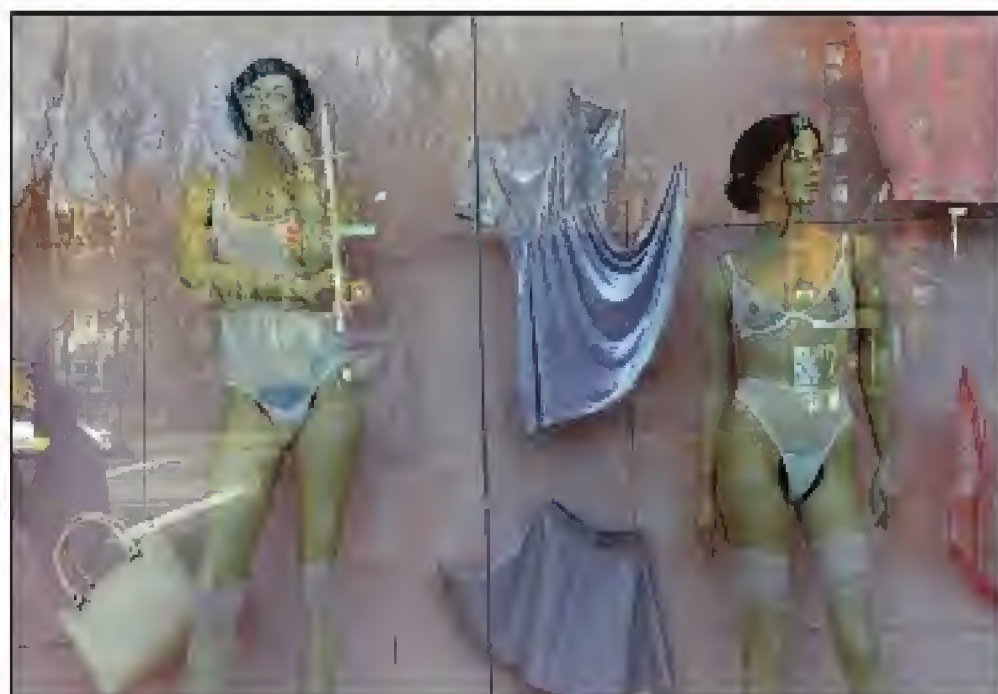
The government will lose 700 million euros in revenues this year and in 2015 and one billion euros in 2016, Kamp said.

The Netherlands is already struggling to save six billion euros to bring its deficit to within EU norms.

The government will also contribute 144 million euros a year over five years to an earthquake compensation fund.

The 1.2-billion euro fund is co-financed by Shell and Exxon which are in charge of gas production.

The Liberal-Labour government of Prime Minister Mark Rutte in February said that "on an economic level, there's no point" to reduce production.



NEW YORK : Mannequins with pubic hair are displayed in the window of an American Apparel shop on Houston Street in the Soho section of Manhattan January 17, 2014 in New York. US clothing chain American Apparel has sparked controversy by putting mannequins sprouting pubic hair in the windows of their shop in New York's boho Lower East Side. The hairy mannequins are currently on show only at one store and there are no plans to roll out the look elsewhere in New York or in the United States. Many people consider women's body hair a private embarrassment requiring painful grooming at beauty salons, and find the display shocking and provocative. But American Apparel, which in the past has been accused of sexist and controversial marketing campaigns, said it was celebrating "natural beauty" in the run-up to the Valentine's Day rush. (AFP PHOTO)



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O	V	E	N	W	E	A	L	T
P	E	N	N	I	E	S	I	I
E	N	D	M	E	R	V		
H	E	I	R	S	T	I	D	E
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R	I	M	L	E	O	T	A	R
E	X	U	D	E	S	E	B	A
M	I	N	U	E	T	R	I	N
R	E	E	K	S	M	E	T	E



Current as of:	Currency	Buying rate banknotes	Buying Cheques	Selling Rate
01/17/2014	Code			
U.S.A.	USD	1.77	1.78	1.80
Dutch Antilles	ANG	98.00	100.00	100.20
Canada	CAD	1.60	1.62	1.64
Britain	GBP	2.86	2.91	2.97
Switzerland	CHF	196.05	196.77	197.57
Netherlands	EUR	239.75	241.94	244.37
Sweden	SEK	26.53	27.25	28.05
Denmark	DKK	31.46	32.18	32.98
Norway	NOK	27.90	28.62	29.42
Japan	JPY	169.08	170.62	172.33
(per 10,000)				

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Switzerland, EU kick off tax talks

GENEVA (AFP) - Switzerland and Brussels began talks yesterday to update a deal under which taxes on savings banked in the Alpine country by EU citizens are paid back anonymously to their homelands.

"The aim of the revision is to close the gaps and prevent people from evading the taxation of their interest income by interposing bogus companies or resorting to certain financial instruments," the Swiss international financial department said in a statement.

In December, the Swiss government formally adopted a negotiating mandate for talks on the issue, following a similar move by European Union member states in May.

Both sides have pledged to hold regular rounds of talks during the first six months of this year.

With the financial crisis raising the stakes in the debate over offshore tax havens, Switzerland has opted to give ground in some areas in order to try to defend the increasingly-contested principle of banking secrecy.

Switzerland, which is not a member of the 28-nation EU, is surrounded by the bloc's members and has tight economic ties with them.

In 2005, before the crisis hit, it struck a deal with Brussels under which it taxes the accounts of non-resident EU citizens who have money in the country, and then transfers the cash to the individual's homeland without revealing their names.

The current tax rate is 35 percent -- it was raised from the original 20 percent in 2011 -- with Switzerland keeping a quarter of the sum levied as an administrative fee.

Only interest in the narrowest sense is taxed, but Brussels wants to widen the net to cover dividends from shares and life insurance policies, as well as capital gains from the sale of shares and real estate.

For 2012, Switzerland transferred a total of 461 million Swiss francs (384 million euros, \$508 million) to EU member states, marking a 2.0 percent increase on the 2011 sum.

HSBC, Citi suspend forex traders

LONDON (AFP) - British bank HSBC suspended two foreign exchange traders and US bank Citigroup put two on leave, they said yesterday, amid international probes into possible market manipulation.

"HSBC can confirm the suspension of two FX traders in London," a spokeswoman told AFP, without giving further details.

A London-based Citi spokesman confirmed that Citi placed two FX spot traders on leave.

Authorities in the United States, Britain, Switzerland,

Hong Kong and Singapore have opened probes into foreign-exchange market manipulation.

Britain's regulator, the Financial Conduct Authority, said in October that alongside several other agencies it was investigating a number of firms relating to trading on the foreign exchange market.

The banking sector has already been shaken by a rigging scandal related to the Libor, a rate for lending between banks that also determines numerous financial and interest rate contracts around the world.

COMICS

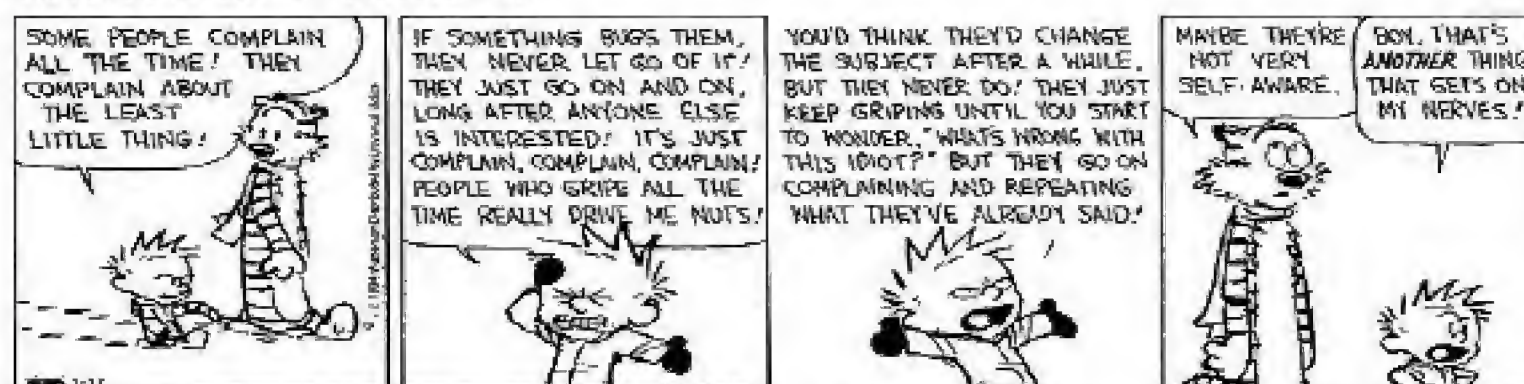
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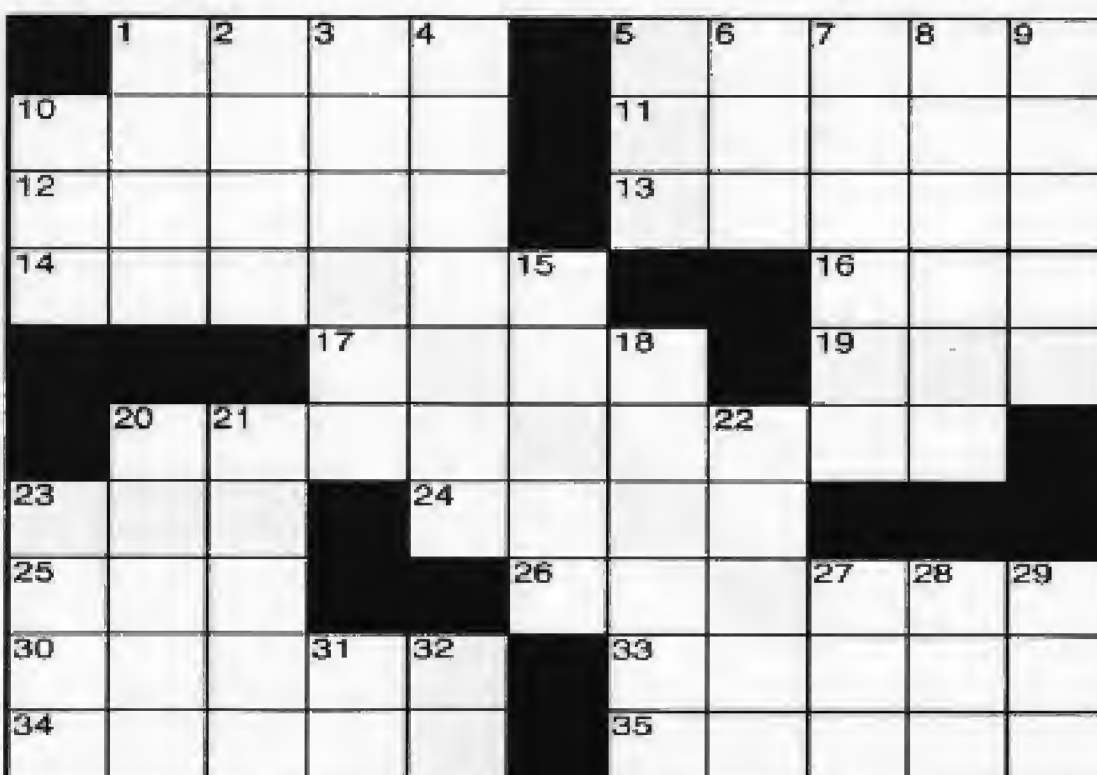
ACROSS

- 1 Wartime "meat"
- 5 Gordon and Westheimer
- 10 Not here
- 11 Actress Winfrey
- 12 "Houseboat" actress
- 13 "True Grit" star
- 14 Enumer-
- ates
- 16 Eisen-hower's nickname
- 17 Dropper's word
- 19 Author Anais —
- 20 Political favoritism
- 23 —-Ameri-can
- 24 Ado
- 25 Informer
- 26 Nursery rhyme

- Jack and his wife
- 30 Actor Ryan
- 33 Elf's kin
- 34 Highway sign
- 35 Milestone
- 36 Valuable
- 37 IQ —

DOWN

- 1 Command to a fly
- 2 Neighbor of Bolivia
- 3 "You — Alone" (Michael
- Jackson song, 2 wds.)
- 4 Counse-lors
- 5 Use oars
- 6 — tree (cornered, 2 wds.)
- 7 Difficult
- 8 Tear dabber
- 9 High gloss
- 10 What a nurse gives (abbr.)
- 15 Dalma-tians' marks
- 18 Fragment
- 20 Aircrafts
- 21 Changes
- 22 Make it
- 23 Perfume
- 27 Chopping tools
- 28 Hue
- 29 Tennis unit
- 31 Era
- 32 Rent



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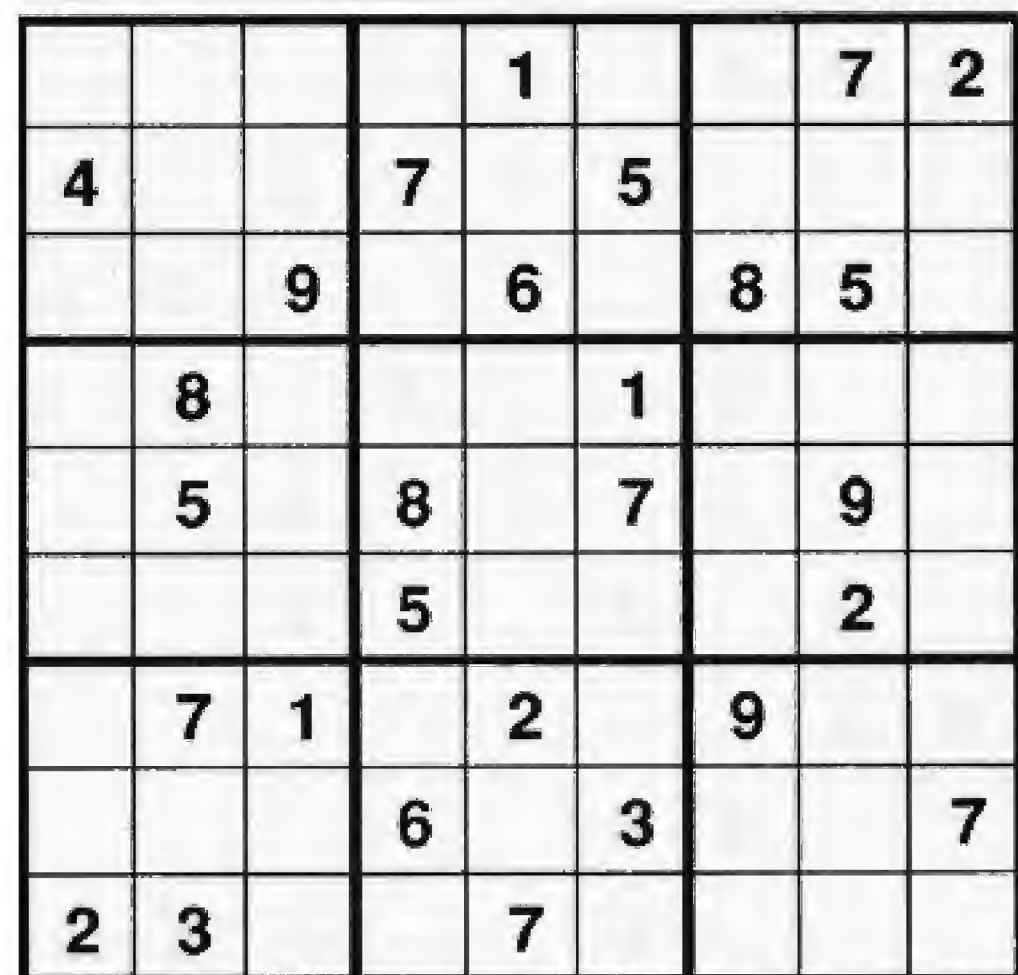
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Sudoku



SOLUTION

5	8	4	6	2	1	9	8	3
2	1	2	8	9	8	8	7	8
9	6	8	8	2	4	1	2	5
8	2	2	9	8	5	4	6	1
1	6	8	2	4	7	8	2	5
8	7	5	1	6	2	2	8	9
4	5	8	2	9	6	8	1	2
8	9	1	9	8	2	8	2	4
2	2	8	4	1	8	5	9	8

Complete the grid so that every row and every column contains the numbers 1 through 9. A number is Never repeated in a row or column. In addition every rectangle must contain the numbers 1 through 9.

O Condominiums

A small, exclusive boutique condo resort tailored to your taste



Aruba's most successful developers of secure, superior communities for both the permanent and part time resident market, will soon break ground on what they consider their most exclusive project to date. Known for 16 years of unmatched quality and service, the Cas Bon people are proud to unveil their new pet

project: O Condominiums. This is the same company which developed the innovative Gold Coast Villas community in Malmok.

Renowned for reliable construction, developers of O Condominiums consider the boutique community will be the "jewel in the crown" of the nine projects they have successfully completed and

maintain. It is only three stories and twenty luxurious units, of which 14 will be oceanfront, the remainder, ocean view. Sizes range from one bedroom condominiums with a bath and a half to three-bedrooms, each bedroom with its own bath, and an additional guest half/bath. The designs include a family entertainment room that will

be specially fitted with electronic and Internet connections and outlets enabling a state-of-the-art-home theater. An important aspect of this singular facility is owners have various options to customize kitchens and fixtures to their particular tastes and standards.

Each apartment sports an extremely spacious 35 square meter covered terrace overlooking the sea. Windows will be double-paned and doors

have weather stripping to insure less cost on air-conditioning, which is integrated into construction. Homeowners will have input into the finishing they prefer in the kitchen and other rooms, to customize your condominium to your taste. Public amenities will include an elegant pool deck, concierge

services, lounge area, BBQ station, fitness room, assigned parking, additional outside storage for bicycles and personal items, and 24-hour security. A quiet, secluded section of Eagle beach is only a few steps from the front door.

O Condominiums officially opened the doors of their sales office onsite at Eagle Beach on December 24. Interested parties can inspect the project in a spacious plot right next to the gourmet Screaming Eagle restaurant. The project is directed towards discerning clients seeking a top quality property on Aruba in an ideal, tranquil, beachfront location. Prospective property owners will find the Cas Bon people enjoy an exceptional reputation on Aruba for excellence and reliability.

Contact the sales office at 297-732-0000/ 297-287-5300 or visit their website: <http://www.o-eaglebeach.aruba.com>

Discover authentic Aruban cuisine at *The Queen's*



Mama Luisa hard at work in the kitchen

Enjoy a true taste of Aruba without having to travel in the charming surroundings of The Queen's Restaurant in the Palm Beach Plaza Mall. Your host, Varela Innocencia has brought her very popular Oranjestad eatery to Palm Beach, showcasing authentic local cuisine only a short walk away from the major resorts.

The "hipper" and elegant new digs offer beautiful views, but Mama Luisa's magical touch in the kitchen is what

first won this charming eatery their loyal clientele. She can be counted on to be conjuring up the delicious dishes that have been in her family for generations. As Varela says, "My mom loves and lives to cook. Even when she is not at work in the restaurant, she is experimenting with new dishes all day at home."

She is the Queen of the Kitchen."

Be sure to try Luisa's acclaimed "Carni Stoba di Ma-

machi" - "Grandma's Beef Stew," or their fresh, whole snapper, with Mama Luisa's delectable salsa criollo. Don't miss the specialty of the house, a favorite local delicacy, Keshi Yena - "Filled Cheese." This is a tasty, filling stew of chicken, with other ingredients that are handy that day, all incased in a thick skin of melted Gouda. It is satisfying and particularly memorable. Regional side dishes and some of Mama's secret recipe prepara-

tion of banana hasa and creamy potatoes provide a deliciously picturesque meal.

The Queen's is located on the second level of Palm Beach Plaza, tucked into a cozy corner at the front of the mall. If you have a mind to try the real deal in Aruban food, without a doubt, this is the way to go, reasonably priced and easily accessible. A full menu can be seen on their website, <http://www.thequeensaruba.com/>.

Aside from an extensive regular menu they also have daily specials made from whatever is in season, and Mama Luisa is in the mood to prepare, so don't be shy about asking for something that may not be on the menu, as they are always eager to please.

The Queen's is open daily from 3:00 pm - 11:00 pm, offering both indoor and outdoor dining.

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Figure skating: Lipnitskaia, 15, leads Russian 1-2 at Europeans

BUDAPEST, (AFP) - Fifteen-year-old Julia Lipnitskaia said she should now be given one of the berths on the Russian Winter Olympic team after surging to her first gold at the European figure skating championships in Budapest on Friday.

The skater from Ekaterinburg broke down in tears after grabbing gold in her first major competition ahead of compatriot Adelina Sotnikova, 17, with five-time winner Carolina Kostner of Italy taking bronze after falling in the free skating final.

"There are only two slots on the women's team for Sochi. As European champion I think I should make it now," said Lipnitskaia, who had been trailing in second behind national champion Sotnikova after the short programme.

Her flawless performance to the music of "Schindler's List" brought the crowd to their feet as she scored a personal best 139.75 for the free skate for an overall total of 209.72.



"My goal for the Olympics is just to skate clean and show good skating," added Lipnitskaia, who finished second behind Japanese Olympic hope Mao Asada in the Grand Prix final this season.

Sotnikova, 17, scored a personal best 131.63 for her free skate to "Rondo Capriccioso" where the only glitch was two-footing the landing on her opening triple lutz.

There were also tears but of disappointment as she finished 5.36 behind Lipnitskaia

with an overall was 202.36.

Clad in black, Kostner had looked in with a shot at a sixth title but the 26-year-old fell on a triple toeloop jump in her routine to Ravel's "Bolero".

The former world champion scored 122.42 for the free skate and 191.39 overall.

Lipnitskaia, who finished second to Sotnikova at the Russian championships last month, had been just 0.76 points behind after the short programme.

Tennis: Clinical Djokovic ousts Istomin to reach last 16

MELBOURNE (AFP) - Three-time defending champion Novak Djokovic fought off Denis Istomin to win in straight sets and reach the fourth round at the Australian Open on Friday. The second seed beat the 49th-ranked Uzbek 6-3, 6-3, 7-5 in just under two hours. It was Djokovic's 24th straight win at the Australian Open as he bids to become only the second man after Australia's Roy Emerson to win the event four times in a row. The Serb also remains unbeaten in 27 Tour matches since his US Open triumph last year. It was a solid performance from the Serb with 31 winners and 23 unforced errors, while breaking Istomin's serve five times. Djokovic will play Italian 15th seed Fabio Fognini in the round of 16.



BRIEFS:

Rousseff to meet with Blatter on World Cup
BRASILIA (AFP) - Brazilian President Dilma Rousseff will meet FIFA president Sepp Blatter on the sidelines of next week's Davos World Economic Forum to discuss World Cup preparations, Rousseff's office said Friday. The pair will meet after Blatter earlier this month slammed Brazil for being further behind schedule than previous host nations in the 16 years that he has been head of world football's governing body. Blatter accused Brazilian organizers of having begun preparing too late after being awarded the event in 2007. Half of the 12 stadiums were unable to meet a FIFA completion deadline of December 31. The Brazilian leader will meet Blatter at FIFA's Zurich headquarters, her office told AFP.

Woman judge named for Pistorius murder trial

JOHANNESBURG (AFP) - A woman judge has been appointed to hear the case of South African Paralympic champion Oscar Pistorius, accused of murdering his girlfriend, which opens in early March, a judiciary official said Friday. High Court judge Thokozile Matilda Masipa will preside at the trial, a spokeswoman for the judiciary, Lulama Luti, told AFP. Pistorius is set to go on trial on March 3 for the Valentine's Day murder of his lover Reeva Steenkamp. He will also answer charges for discharging a firearm on two separate occasions before Steenkamp's death. Masipa, 66, was appointed a judge in 1988 in what was then the Transvaal Provincial division, becoming only the second black woman to be admitted to the bench during the apartheid era.

Klinsmann 'pretty sure' US will reach last 16

LOS ANGELES (AFP) - US coach Jurgen Klinsmann says the Americans are "pretty sure" of reaching the last 16 of this year's World Cup in Brazil, according to an ESPN website report Friday. The former German international made his confident prediction before the team departed for a camp in Sao Paulo, where it will be based in June. "I'm pretty sure we are going to make it through to the (knockout) round," Klinsmann said in the blog posting. The Americans will need to finish in the top two in their opening-round group to reach the last 16 knockout stage of the 32-team event. They were drawn into a group with Germany, the side Klinsmann once coached and played with, Portugal, led by superstar Cristiano Ronaldo and Ghana, the team that eliminated the US from the 2006 and 2010 World Cups.


Mavericks' Israeli rookie Mekel out after knee surgery

DALLAS (AFP) - Dallas Mavericks point guard Gai Mekel, an NBA rookie from Israel, underwent arthroscopic surgery on Friday to repair a torn meniscus in his right knee, the team announced. There is no timetable for the return of the two-time Most Valuable Player of the Israeli League, who signed with the Mavericks last July to become only the second Israeli player in the NBA. Mekel led Maccabi Haifa to the Israeli League championship last season after playing the 2011-2012 season for Treviso in the Italian league. He also played two US collegiate seasons for Wichita State University from 2006-2008. Mekel, 25, has played in 30 games this season, averaging 2.4 points and 2.1 assists. The Mavericks are 23-17, eighth in the NBA Western Conference and 8.5 games behind San Antonio in the Southwest division.

Lille title blow with second successive defeat

PARIS (AFP) - Lille suffered a second successive defeat and squandered vital ground in the French title race when St Etienne grabbed a 2-0 Ligue 1 victory on Friday. On Sunday, leaders PSG welcome Nantes to the capital where a win could give them an eight-point lead over Monaco should the second-placed side lose at Toulouse.


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NFL: Super Bowl spots at stake in playoff showdowns

DENVER (AFP) - Peyton Manning will lead Denver's record-setting offense against Tom Brady and New England for a Super Bowl berth Sunday while Seattle's NFL-best defense faces San Francisco for the other spot.

New England will visit the Broncos in the American Conference final while the Seahawks and their notoriously noisy home crowd will entertain San Francisco in the National Conference final.

The playoff semi-final showdowns will decide the opponents in Super Bowl 48 on February 2 in suburban New York, with Brady seeking a fourth Super Bowl crown and Manning hoping for a second.

Brady leads Manning 10-4 in the all-time rivalry of star



quarterbacks, with wins in two of their three playoff meetings.

Brady pulled off the greatest comeback of his career in the regular season when Denver took a 24-0 half-time lead at New England only to have the Patriots rally for a 34-31 overtime win.

But Manning, cut by Indianapolis after neck surgery and signed by Denver in early 2012, has not lost a rematch game since 2007, going 5-0 since then in second chances against teams that beat him earlier in a campaign.

The Broncos set an NFL one-season scoring record with Manning setting new NFL passing yardage and passing touchdowns marks. One of his favorite targets is Wes Welker, an ex-Patriots receiver.

"They are great quarterbacks. There aren't too many differences," Welker said in comparing the star passers. Manning expects Brady to be at full power Sunday for New England's first road playoff game since 2007, one that figures to be high scoring.

"Our defense is in for a tough challenge," said Manning. "We have to do our part

offensively. The thing that jumps out about Tom is his consistency. He's a better player each year than he was the year before."

Patriots coach Bill Belichick can match Tom Landry for the most playoff coaching wins in NFL history by taking his 20th on Sunday.

"It's going to be a challenge

but we're looking forward to it," Patriots coach Bill Belichick said. "Manning is a great quarterback but we have got to prepare for the entire team."

The Patriots have not won a Super Bowl since 2005, losing to the New York Giants in 2008 and 2012. The Broncos have not reached the champi-

onship spectacle since back-to-back wins in 1998 and 1999.

Seattle's only Super Bowl appearance was a 2006 loss to Pittsburgh while the 49ers seek a return to the big game after losing last year to Baltimore in their first Super Bowl since beating San Diego in 1995 for their fifth crown in 14 seasons.

The Seahawks led the NFL in denying opponents points and yardage and beat San Francisco 29-3 earlier this season in Seattle, where they have won the past two meetings with the 49ers by a combined 71-16.

The 49ers have experience with the Seattle crowds, whose record noise levels make hearing coded play signals difficult for opponents.

But the Seahawks are 16-1 at home over two years and have won six home playoff games in a row.

"We're ready to go," 49ers quarterback Colin Kaepernick said. "We're a different team than the last time we played up there."

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NBA: Thunder storm back to down Rockets

HOUSTON (AFP) - Kevin Durant had 36 points as Oklahoma City rallied from a double digit halftime deficit to hold Houston to just 19 points in the second half en route to a 104-92 win. Durant also had seven assists and five rebounds for the Thunder who trailed by 14 points at the end of the second quarter before pulling away in the second half. The Rockets led 73-59 at the break after going 12-of-20 from beyond the arc, but missed all 14 of their three-point attempts over the final two quarters while scoring a woeful 19 points. The minus-54 point differential is the largest between halves in NBA history. Reggie Jackson finished with 23 points and six steals for the Thunder, who had lost three of their previous four games. Houston's James Harden collected 16 points, eight assists and seven rebounds against his former team. Terrence Jones chipped in with 16 points and 13 boards for the Rockets who had their three-game win streak snapped. A Chandler Parsons layup pulled Houston within 90-89 midway through the fourth, but the Thunder answered with a 13-3 surge. Jackson had seven points during the run, which he finished off with a dunk for a 103-92 Thunder lead with just over one minute left. The Thunder led 36-32 at the end of the first quarter, but the Rockets outscored the Thunder 41-23 in the second to take a 14-point lead into the locker room. Durant's three-pointer at the third-quarter buzzer tied the game at 83-83.



Cycling: Ballan banned two years, doctor banned for life



ROME (AFP) - Italy's Alessandro Ballan, the world road race champion in 2008, was handed a two-year doping ban by Italy's Olympic Committee (CONI) on Friday.

Ballan was punished by CONI's anti-doping tribunal after it ruled he had contravened article 2.2 of the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) code relating to "the use or attempted use of banned substances".

A statement from CONI on Friday confirmed the "responsibility of the athlete Alessandro Ballan in contravening article 2.2 of the World Anti-Doping Code and imposes a suspension of two years with effect from January 17, 2014 until January 16, 2016.

"Ballan has also been condemned to pay the costs of this proceeding, estimated at 400 euros and to pay a fine of 2,000 euros."

Ballan was suspected of being embroiled in a doping affair which has also implicated two doctors, Guido Nigrelli and Fiorenzo Egeo Bonazzi -- both of whom were alleged to have aided his attempt to procure and use banned substances.

CONI prosecutors had initially requested the ban on the basis of evidence supplied by a public prosecutor in Mantua.

CONI banned Nigrelli for life and Bonazzi for four years.

Ballan had previously been suspended by BMC due to allegations of doping but after being cleared by the Swiss-American team the Italian, a former winner of the Tour of Flanders, resumed racing again in May 2010.

BMC have said in recent days they were standing by Ballan pending the outcome of the tribunal.

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Betico Croes Cup to play interesting games



ORANJESTAD - The Betico Croes Cup games are ready for their second round of games next week in the Guillermo P. Trinidad Sports Complex in Noord.

After RCA, Trupial, Britannia and National classified for the next final, the bout now remains between Riverplate and Caiquetio as well as with Dakota and La Fama to decide which will classify. Last Monday night Riverplate and Caiquetio faced off with each other with Riverplate winning with a score of 1-0 against Caiquetio.

On Tuesday La Fama and Dakota played their game with La Fama winning with a score of 4-1.

On Saturday January 18th

the grand final begins. The first game with RCA and Trupial at 3:30 in the CDGPT. At 3:30 the Piedra Plat and National teams will take the field.

The following day on Sunday the 19th from 6:00pm the Brazil Jrs will confront the Estrella team. And, at 8:00pm the Riverplate and La Fama teams will face off.

Along with these interesting games the Aruba Football Bond announces that on Saturday the Halftime Special will begin at Afls.900. There will also be chances to win a large Domino's Pizza, a case of Coca Cola, a case of Gatorade, an intro class for CrossAruba, as well as a chance to win an iPad Air from MIO Wireless. Everyone



is invited to come out and enjoy these games. Who knows you might have the winning ticket for the Afls.900 prize.

There will be entertaining music by Roberto Geerman. Entrance fee is Afls.10 and

Silver entrance is Afls.15. Those holding Seasons Cards enter free of charge. AVB is especially grateful to their sponsors, Domino's Pizza, Coca Cola, Gatorade, CrossAruba, Big Wheel Lottery and MIO Wireless.

